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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN SHERPA SEEKS SMOOTH NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT
REF: SECSTATE 7493

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY-QIvQQG:kov lamented that involving non-NPT signatories India and Pakistan in the Summit will lead to an agreed text which is "devoid of important things." Stressing the importance of a smooth summit, he said that resulting documents based on the lowest common denominator will still be better than nothing. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 28, ESTH Counselor and Dutch DCM, joined by nuclear affairs officers from both embassies, delivered jointly reftel invite to the third Sherpa meeting in The Hague on February 9-11 to Ambassador Grigoriy Berdennikov, Russian Sherpa for the Nuclear Security Summit. Berdennikov confirmed that his team had already registered, including Mikhail Lysenko, Director of International Cooperation of Rosatom, and Aleksandr Boluchev from the MFA's Department of Security and Disarmament. A fourth person from the Russian Embassy at The Hague may also take part. Berdennikov confirmed he was aware of the three person delegation limit, adding that the Russian delegation would not make itself burdensome.

¶3. (SBU) Berdennikov described the Summit communique as "more or less there," while the work plan is "more problematic." He noted there was little enthusiasm at the December Sherpa meeting in Tokyo for a follow-on meeting after the Summit, adding that some do not clearly understand the purpose of the Summit. He said the GOR was fine with no further meetings, instead stressing the importance of a "smooth" Summit in April.

¶4. (SBU) Noting that the GOR was not consulted on the list of participants, he said the composition of the summit would make it difficult to accomplish much. Illustrating his point, Berdennikov said the GOR welcomed language in previous work plan drafts in favor of increasing the membership of the Nuclear Terrorism Convention. However, because some of the invited participants are not members of the Convention and opposed such language, the language is no longer in the draft, which Russia regrets. Berdennikov further lamented the lack of a quid pro quo, as the draft work plan does ask the G-8 for something, but does not ask the other states to reciprocate with action. He recalled that the G-8 text was able to be much more ambitious because it was crafted by likeminded nations. Berdennikov stressed that it is difficult involve non-NPT signatories India and Pakistan in a non-proliferation forum based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He clarified that although the Summit is not billed as being NPT-based, for all intents and purposes it is. He added, that it's important for non-NPT signatories' voices to be heard. But including them in this Summit leads to very bland text, "devoid of important things."

¶5. (SBU) Given that India and Pakistan will want to "bargain until the end," Berdennikov emphasized that the GOR's primary goal is for the Nuclear Security Summit to be "as ruly as possible." He said that the resulting documents may be based on a lowest common denominator which is very low indeed, but the LCD is still desirable as it is better than nothing, and far better than a fight. Briefly animated, he stated that a fight in Washington should be avoided at all costs as that would be a "major blow" to the non-proliferation cause.

¶6. (SBU) Finally, Berdennikov noted that the GOR had wanted Armenia and Belarus to be invited to the Summit. Armenia, he explained, is the only country in its region with an ongoing nuclear program and a good record on fighting nuclear terrorism. Armenia feels left out as Georgia is in "and it has nothing." Belarus, he continued, has nuclear research reactors, has just signed an agreement with DOE for HEU removal, and has a good record on anti-terrorism. Belarus is "offended" that Ukraine is in and it is not.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Despite Berdennikov's complaints, the meeting was very cordial in tone. He appeared personally committed to a smooth summit, even if the final results must be watered down in order to reach consensus. End Comment.

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